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A robotic "thinking telescope" named RAPTOR surprised the world with its unexpected detection of the early optical light from gamma-ray bursts, the super-energetic cosmic explosions believed to announce the birth of stellar-size black holes. RAPTOR, along with Burst Alert telescope software, also developed at Los Alamos, provided detection and automatic data recording capabilities during every phase of the event. Now it is being transformed into a next-generation global network of survey and fast-response telescopes, a pathfinder technology for exploring the dynamic universe in real time and making significant discoveries without human intervention.

Thinking telescope surprises world with first glimpse of brightest gamma ray burst